

Key Elementary School

2025-2026



Parent and Student Handbook

“Unlocking a Whole New World of Education”

**2520 Broadmoor Drive
Columbus, GA 31903**

(706) 683-8797 (phone)

**Dr. Jacqueline Flakes, Principal
Dr. Alicia Poole, Assistant Principal**

Key Elementary School

2025-2026

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Students:

The Key faculty and staff anticipate that the 2025-2026 school year will be our best school year ever! The Muscogee County School District mission is “**to inspire and equip all students to achieve unlimited potential**”. Because we believe in the district’s mission statement, we value our parental support and participation as it is essential to student success and the success of our entire program. This booklet is provided to inform you of policies and procedures at Key Elementary as well as programs and events in the upcoming school year. We look forward to working with you and your children.

For the 2025-2026 school year, school begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. Students are expected to be in their classrooms at 7:45 a.m. Students may enter the building at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast is served daily from 7:00 a.m. until 7:30. According to the Muscogee County School District Policy, students are considered tardy if they arrive after 7:45 a.m. Parents/Guardians must accompany the student to the main entrance and ring the doorbell to speak with school personnel. Please remain with your student until school personnel arrive at the door in order for you to sign in your student for class. Please help your child be on time because it will help them get off to a great start!

Please call ahead of time if you need to check out your student(s). Students may not be checked out after 1:45 p.m. We will only release students to persons listed in Infinite Campus and who can also present proper identification.

We know that our Key staff will do their personal best to help your child have a wonderful learning experience. To achieve this learning experience, the students are expected to follow the Key **PAWS** Student Creed: “I am a Key Bulldog. I take **P**ride in myself. I have a positive **A**ttitude. And I make **W**ise choices in order to be **S**afe.

Together, we will work hard to help your child succeed!

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Flakes

Jacqueline D. Flakes, Ed.D.
Principal



MCSD 2025-2026 School Calendar

July 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1-25 Summer Break
4 Independence Day Observed
28-31 Teacher Planning/Staff Development Days

August 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

1 Teacher Planning/Staff Development Days
4 1st Day of School/1st Semester Begins

September 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1 Labor Day
4 Progress Reports
19 Virtual Learning Day



2025-26 School Year Calendar

- Student/teacher holiday
- Semester start dates
- Teacher planning/staff development/student holiday
- Virtual Day
- Last Day for Students

October 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

6 End of Nine Weeks
8 Report Cards
9 Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day
10-13 Fall Break

November 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

11 Veterans Day
12 Progress Reports
24-28 Thanksgiving Break

December 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

19 1st Semester Grading Period Ends
23-31 Winter Break

January 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

1-2 Winter Break
5 Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day
6 2nd Semester Begins
7 Report Cards
19 Martin Luther King Jr., Day

February 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

6 Progress Reports
13 Teacher Planning/Staff Development Day
16 Presidents Day

March 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

12 End of 3rd Nine Weeks
17 Report Cards
30 Spring Break

April 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

1-3 Spring Break
21 Progress Reports

May 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

20-23 Graduation
21 Last Day/Report Cards (Elementary)
25 Memorial Day
22-26 Teacher Post Planning
26 Report Cards (Secondary)
27-29 Summer Break

June 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

1-30 Summer Break

Key Elementary Faculty/Staff 2025-2026 School Year

Principal	Dr. Jacqueline Flakes
Assistant Principal	Dr. Alicia Poole
Academic Coach	Heather Zurita
Academic Coach	Sophia Nicholson
Secretary	Andrea Dowdell
Clerk	Sandra Mendoza-Johnson

Kindergarten Teachers

Jessika Tye
Iradia Rodriguez

First Grade Teachers

Isabella Hambling
Samuel Jones
Lesley Stewart

Second Grade Teachers

Kimberly Brown
Bayleah Hurst

Third Grade Teachers

Jordan Ash
Ethan Cox
Samuel Jones

Fourth Grade Teachers

Pamela DeLapp
Sonya Patterson

Fifth Grade Teachers

Aura Johnson
Antonia Smith

Special Education

Florence Evermon, Lead
Lori Denham
Joshua McMichael

Paraprofessionals

ESOL

Latisha Bledsoe

Pre-K & Pre-K STEPS

Deborah Austin-Weaver
Channell Williams
Antonio Mathis

Paraprofessionals

Sherri Allen (Kindergarten)	Lavasia Norwood (Pre-K)
Tangela Ballenger (Kindergarten)	Jasmine Owens (Pre-K)
Denise D'Amato (First Grade)	Jazmine Harris (PK STEPS)
Ada Orta (Second Grade)	Shakeithaya Porter (PK STEPS)
Bonita Hicks (Interrelated SPED)	

Art

Alexandra Countryman

Music

Sarah King

Physical Education

Roderick Martin

Counselor

Jeanie Parks

Media Specialist

Brooke Sims

Other Support Staff

Ashley McCarley, Speech Pathologist
Stephanie Favors, Occupational Therapist,
Kenarin Kellogg, School Social Worker
Vacant, School Psychologist
Heather Chester, LEA
Leticia Rucker, Clinic Worker

Cafeteria Staff

Erika Muhammad, Manager

Custodians

Paul Williams, Lead Custodian
Nyquasia Lowman, Custodian
Alisha Ross, Custodian

Mission

Our mission is to Build Undeniable Learners and Leaders Destined for Optimal Greatness and Success.

Beliefs

At Key Elementary, we believe:

- Well – rounded students are enriched by exposure to a wealth of academic opportunities including reading, math, science, social studies, the arts, technology, physical education, and media literacy.
- Learning is an engaging process in which students' individual needs are addressed, and their fullest potential is reached.
- School is a safe, supportive, and nurturing place where relationships are based on mutual respect.
- Teachers are respected professionals who take initiative, promote change, and continuously grow.
- High expectations for achievement, citizenship, and environmental responsibility are held for everyone.
- Cultivating a standard of excellence is a vital part of each child's successful future

School Uniform

DRESS CODE

Key Elementary School implements a school-wide uniform dress code policy for students in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Our school's mission reflects that a student's primary focus during the school day is learning. We know that when students dress in uniforms they are proud of how they look, display more school spirit and learning is enhanced. In addition, uniforms contribute positively to student behavior and thereby minimizes discipline infractions. The uniforms are as follows:

Shirt Color

White, Light Blue, Royal Blue, Navy Blue or Yellow

Pants/Skirts Color

Navy Blue or Khaki

Outerwear

Same as shirt colors

SHIRTS

Shirts should be tucked in at all times.

NO tank tops, spaghetti straps, tube tops or see-through shirts allowed.

NO midriffs should be exposed (including when arms are raised).

NO solid white t-shirts or undershirts.

NO Graphic t-shirts/hoodies, including pictures or words

PANTS/SKIRTS

Students may wear **khaki or navy** shorts, pants, capris, skirts, skorts or jumpers. Shorts and skirts must be no higher than 3" above the knees. Students should wear a belt to keep pants at or above the waist. **NO** oversized pants/bound pants/sagging pants.

ALL outerwear, including sweatshirts and hoodless jackets must be in solid uniform colors.

SHOES

For safety concerns, ALL shoes need to be rubber-soled with enclosed toes and heels.

Tennis shoes are preferred for school wear. Tennis shoes are required to worn during Physical Education.

NO flips flops.

NO slides or crocs.

NO sandals and high heels.

Bookbags: All students will be required to use clear bookbags this school year.

ATTENDANCE

Absences, Tardiness, and Early Checkouts

Success in school is directly related to daily school attendance. Children must regularly attend school in order to learn and perform well academically. The state of Georgia has a compulsory attendance law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1) that governs school attendance. Students must be in school at least half of the instructional day (3 hours and 20 minutes) in order to be counted present. Also, students must arrive before 11:00 a.m. or leave after 11:00 a.m. in order to be counted as present.

***Excessive absences (3 or more day) and/or tardiness in grade K-5 will result in a letter of "Notification of Excessive Absences" from a school administrator or a referral may be made to the school social worker.

The school day begins at 7:45 a.m. each day and ends at 2:15 p.m. **Students should not arrive on campus before 7:15 a.m. as there is no supervision available.** It is dangerous to leave children unattended before 7:15 a.m. anywhere on campus.

Morning Arrival

7:15 a.m.	Students may begin entering the building and eat breakfast.
7:30 a.m.	Students are dismissed to the grade level hallway.
7:45 a.m.	School begins.

ABSENCES (continued)

The following guidelines related to absences and/or tardiness must be observed:

1. **Excused Absences:** Muscogee County School District policy states that students may be temporarily excused from school for: personal illness, serious illness or death in the student's immediate family, observance of religious holidays necessitating an absence from school, compliance with a court order, conditions causing school attendance impossible or hazardous to one's health or safety, situations in which attendance would be detrimental to the health of the student or others. This list is not comprehensive. For a more complete list, you may reference school board policy at www.muscogee.k12.ga.us. **Within three days of returning to school from an absence, the student must present the teacher with a written excuse providing the dates and the reason for the absence, and signed by a parent or guardian. A note from a doctor, dentist or other healthcare provider will also be accepted.** We will accept emails from parents temporarily if they are followed by a signed note within three days. This note alone does not excuse the absence, however. The reason for the absence will be reviewed and it will be determined if the absence can be excused based on the school board policy. Please note that vacation or family trips are not excused unless **preapproved** by the principal in writing.
2. **Unexcused absences:** An unexcused absence is any absence not covered in the definition above or the more complete policy of MCSD.
3. **Make-up work due to absences:** Parents may call the school before 9:00 a.m. to request make-up work for an absence. Requested assignments may be picked up in the school office after 2:15 p.m. or sent home with another sibling or student as designated by the parent. This gives the teacher adequate time during the day to organize the needed assignments.
4. **Late arrivals:** The parent is responsible for ensuring that the student gets to school on time, unless the tardy is due to a late bus. In that case, the tardy will be excused. **Parents must accompany tardy students to the front office and sign them in.**
5. **Early dismissal:** To maximize instructional time and minimize interruptions of instruction for all students, parents are requested to refrain from checking their child(ren) out of school early except in the case of emergency.

Bus Safety

School transportation safety is an important part of our school program. Riding the bus

is a privilege based on appropriate and courteous behavior. Violations of school and district rules while riding the bus may result in the loss of that privilege. Behavior on the school bus is an extension of the classroom and children whose conduct negatively affects their safety or the safety of others will be handled by the bus driver and referred to administration via discipline referral. The Muscogee County Board of Education recognizes that safe school bus operation is possible only with the cooperation of the students, parents and school staff.

When students are riding the bus, they are expected to:

- Follow the **Key Elementary PAWS Expectations**
- Follow the directions of the bus driver at all times
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion and face forward at all times
- Keep hands, head and arms inside the bus
- Refrain from eating on the bus
- Adhere to a “whisper silence” policy while buses are in the school zone
- Get on and off the bus at their stops only. Any change to regular transportation requires a written request from the parent or guardian. All requests must be approved by school administration.

Cafeteria

Breakfast is served beginning at 7:00 a.m. and ending at 7:30 a.m. in the cafeteria. Forgotten lunches may be brought to school by parents and delivered to the front office for students to pick up prior to their lunch time. The front office will notify the teacher that the lunch is there for pick up. We request that lunches from outside vendors such as McDonalds, Chick-fil-a, etc. **not** be brought to school for students. Additionally, students may not bring outside drinks or snacks into the cafeteria. We will provide areas in the cafeteria to ensure that our students who have nut allergies have a ‘safe place’ to enjoy their lunches. Please update the clinic and front office regarding any food allergy concerns your child may have so that we can help ensure your child’s safety while at school. Students who have food that may contain nuts for lunch **may not** sit in these areas because it can create an unsafe environment for students with food allergies.

School Nutrition Program (SNP)

Mission Statement of the Muscogee County School Nutrition Program is to provide a nutrition program that will maintain and improve the health of school children and the educational community and encourage the development of sound nutritional habits that will foster academic success.

USDA has regulations that the School Nutrition Program (SNP) has to meet to be in compliance with their guidelines. Caloric and nutrient requirements are based on age and grade. Also, MCSD Board Approved Wellness Program (EEE and EE-R) encourages and promotes healthy guidelines to be followed including, but not limited to, elimination of the consumption of fried foods, foods containing > 35 % sugar by

weight, and FDA standards for portion sizes. School lunches also offer a variety of foods, whole grains, and fat free and low-fat milk choices. Muscogee County School District shall abide by nutrient standards of the School Nutrition Program for all foods sold and served on campus during the school day. The sale of foods or beverages to students on school premises other than through SNP is prohibited from 12:01 a.m. until 30 minutes after the end of the school day. Food shall not be used as a reward or punishment and shall prohibit the use of candy and other food rewards for academic performance or good behavior. **Fundraising efforts** shall be supportive of healthy eating, encouraging the sale of non-food items or nutrient dense foods. USDA regulations ban the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value.

The School Nutrition Program provides a healthy breakfast and lunch choice for students every day. Students may bring their own lunches from home. **Restaurant containers are not allowed in the cafeteria.** Parents are encouraged to have lunch with their children. School lunch may be purchased to eat in the cafeteria with the students.

School meals are captured using palm scanners for identification, capturing only the image of the veins in their hand. If the parent opts out on their children being scanned, the meal will be rung up under the name.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was established by Congress through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which reauthorized the Child Nutrition Programs. CEP aims to increase access to the School Meal Programs by offering breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students, without the need to process or collect individual free and reduced meal applications. Several of our schools are CEP schools. **Please contact your student's school office or call the School Nutrition Office at (706) 748-2389 to see if your student's school is a CEP school.**

Menus

Monthly menus can be found on the MCSD website. Menus may change on a very short notice due to market conditions, deliveries, or special school activities.

Special Dietary Needs

School Nutrition will accommodate food allergies and special dietary needs when documentation from a doctor is provided. MCSD SNP will make modifications and substitutions to the regular school meals for a student **with a disability that restricts their diet**. Special Dietary Needs Prescription Form **must be** completed and signed by a physician for a student with a disability before the school cafeteria can provide any modifications or substitutions. The completed form must be provided to the school cafeteria Manager, the clinic worker, and the special needs dietitian. A form and instructions can be found on the School Nutrition page of the MCSD web site, or at the school clinic or cafeteria. Nutrition analysis chart for menu items is available on the website.

Please be aware that there are factors that may affect a product's actual nutritional value and/or ingredient composition at any given time: Manufacturers' formulations may change without notice. USDA donated products may become available at any time during the year and may replace a purchased item. Product brands may change during the year as new bids are approved. Schools may be using inventory from a previous bid or manufacturer.

Our recipes may change during the school year. A la carte snack items vary from school to school so check with the Nutrition Manager at your student's school for specific information.

Summer Lunch

SNP provides breakfast and lunch at various schools throughout the district during the summer. Please check the web site or call 706-748-2386 for locations. All children up to 18 years of age may receive a free meal. Adults may purchase a lunch.

USDA REQUIREMENTS

The USDA has set certain standards and guidelines to be followed in the development and implementation of a policy or procedure on unpaid meal charges and alternate meals.

- A. A policy or procedure must be in place by July 1, 2017 for any district with schools not participating in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) district-wide.
- B. Each State Food Authority (SFA) and Local Food Authority (LFA) has the discretion to set their own policy or procedure but should consider the following:
 - Maintain the financial integrity of the Programs
 - Provide children with adequate nutrition to focus in school
 - Minimize stigmatization of children with meal charges – no negative impact
 - Different payment options
 - Identify the stakeholders involved
 - Delinquent debt against the School Nutrition Program
 - Establish standard operating procedures for schools
 - Policy information must be shared annually at the start of each year with schools, parents, and School Nutrition personnel in direct contact with the students. Information should also be shared with students transferring into the district throughout the year. Examples: Student Handbooks, General Administrators' meetings, School Nutrition trainings, MCSD website, and/or again to parents after all avenues of payment has been exhausted.
 - SFAs must maintain documentation of policy communication methods.
 - SFAs must provide policies to the State agency during the Administrative Review.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) was established by Congress through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which reauthorized the Child Nutrition Programs. CEP aims to increase access to the School Meal Programs by offering breakfast and lunch at no charge to all students, without the need to process or collect individual free and reduced meal applications. Several of our schools are CEP schools. **Please contact your student's school office or call the School Nutrition Office at (706) 748-2389 to see if your student's school is a CEP school.**

Calendar

A copy of our district and school calendar of events are located at the front of this Parent and Student Handbook. Events and important information are also included on the Key Elementary School Website.

Car Riders

The car rider entrance loop will be supervised each morning from 7:00 a.m. - 7:45 a.m. Parents are asked to remain in the car rider line and to drop off students in supervised areas only. **In consideration of the safety of our students, parents are not permitted to park their cars and walk students across the driveways. No student should be dropped off in the bus area at any time.**

Parents picking up their students in the afternoon are asked to remain in their car in the car rider line. For the safety of our students, parents are requested not to park their cars and walk students across the driveways. Students will be located inside the building until their designated vehicle drives up to the car rider line. Students will be called to their vehicle. All students will remain under the supervision of an adult until they safely enter their designated vehicle. Car rider tags are assigned at the beginning of the year. The tags are used to help us identify the vehicle. Passing cars in the car rider line is dangerous and therefore not permitted. Late arrivals (after 3:00 p.m.) may pick up their children from the front office. If a student is here after 3:05 p.m., they will go to the After School Program and parents will be charged \$7.00.

Cell Phones

Georgia recently passed **House Bill 340**. This law is also known as the Georgia Distraction-Free Act. This law prohibits the use of cell phones for students in grades K through 8. Therefore, if a student brings a cell phone, they will be required to turn it in to their home teacher and receive it back at the end of the school day. The cell phone will be placed in a secure location throughout the day. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Change of Address/Phone

We must keep accurate records so that we can contact parents in case of an emergency. Please send a note to your child's teacher or the front office indicating any changes in address, phone numbers, or emergency contacts as soon as possible.

Chromebooks

- All students have been issued a Chromebook (to include Case and Charger) to use during the school day. Students must be responsible for their Chromebook/Case/Charger at all times. In an effort to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, students must be responsible for the care of their Chromebook and not damage it in any way. Chromebooks are to be carried in a case at all times when not in use. Students who damage Chromebooks and/or accessories can be assessed a replacement fee as per Board (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).
- **Care and Use of School Property - Chromebooks, Textbooks, and Media Center Checkouts:** Students will be held responsible for the proper care of all books, supplies, Chromebooks, and accessories or equipment furnished to them by the school. A student who defaces, damages, or loses school property shall

be required to pay for the damage or loss (see MCSD Board Policy JS: Student Fees, Fines, and Charges).

- A Parent/Student must pay all fees and fines owed to the school in a timely fashion. Parent/Student must clear all fines or fees during the year the fines are assessed. Fines must be paid/cleared where they were assessed and before moving to the next level in school.

Discipline

Muscogee County School District Code of Conduct Handbooks are sent home with every student. **Parents and students must sign and return the form in the Student Code of Conduct stating they have reviewed the discipline policies of Muscogee County School District. See Appendix A for our school-wide discipline plan.**

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by: emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence-based behavioral practices and organizing resources and systems to improve implementation with fidelity.

Our school-wide behavioral expectations for our students is PAWS. Parental support and open communication enable us to maintain a positive learning environment that promotes success for all students. Developing a positive and safe school climate involves the efforts of staff, students and parents. At Key Elementary, we have established a positive discipline approach that is based on a foundation of mutual respect. This approach allows students to learn from their mistakes while creating an atmosphere of caring, cooperation and responsibility in the classroom, hallway, playground and the cafeteria. Staff members will participate in training throughout the year to learn strategies that can improve classroom experiences and create a positive classroom climate that enhances academic learning and decreases undesirable behaviors and actions.

Key Elementary School-Wide Positive Behavior System PAWS **Focus on Behavior Not Consequences**

The Bulldog Creed

I am a Key Bulldog.

I take Pride in myself.

I have a positive Attitude.

And I make Wise choices in order to be Safe.

Our school-wide objective is that students learn to be responsible for their own behavior. Positive discipline means that, in order to accomplish our goal of helping student learn to behave appropriately and responsibly, we need to work with them on learning how to

make good decisions. Students will be continuously acknowledged for consistently displaying the expected behaviors school-wide.

Drug/Smoke Free School Zone

Legislation enacted by the General Assembly of Georgia makes it unlawful to manufacture, distribute, dispense, or possess a controlled substance in, on, or within 1000 feet of a school. Violation of this law is punishable by up to 20 years in prison and/or up to a \$20,000 fine. The Muscogee County School Board has enacted a policy making all school grounds smoke free zones. Smoking is not allowed by employees, students, or visitors. The no-smoking policy also applies in cases where school functions are held off campus.

Emergency Closing

It is vital that students and parents have a plan to accommodate an emergency closing of school during the day. Please discuss emergency plans together so your child will know what to do in case of an emergency. In the event of bad weather, you may tune in to a local TV or radio station for the latest information regarding school closings. We will also provide updates via ConnectEd and the MCSD website throughout these events if they should occur.

Emergency Procedures

Fire and disaster drills are a necessity and are not to be treated lightly. These drills will be held at irregular and unannounced intervals. All signals are rehearsed with students to provide the safest actions in the case of an emergency. In case Muscogee County is placed under a TORNADO WARNING, we ask that parents NOT come to pick up students or call the school during the WARNING. Emergency procedures will be followed. Please be aware that if Muscogee County is under a TORNADO WARNING at dismissal time, dismissal will be delayed until the threat has passed. Shelter areas have been assigned to each classroom and all Key Elementary personnel know what procedures to follow in an emergency. The driveway in front of the school and the telephone line must both be kept clear for emergency use during such time.

Enrichment Clubs

Key Elementary has a number of student organizations that meet throughout the year. These opportunities are offered to students as enrichment to the curriculum. Organizations available to students of Key Elementary include:

Bulldog of the Month - Teachers will select students each month beginning in September as the BULLDOG OF THE MONTH. Those students will be recognized for demonstrating exemplary behavior and class participation.

First LEGO League Robotics - The First LEGO League Robotics team challenges students to think like scientists and engineers while researching real world problems and designing a solution. Participants embrace the Core Values where they learn that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork.

Picture Book Reading Bowl – A unique reading competition offered to 4th and 5th grade students. The competition was created by Helen Ruffin, a media specialist in Dekalb County.

Math Team – Math team consists of fourth and fifth grade students who excel and have an interest in the area of Mathematics. Students will compete in Math Competitions from around the school district.

Science/Math Olympics – Science Olympics is devoted to increasing student interest in science, improving the quality of science education and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by students. Science Olympics is offered to students in third, fourth and fifth grade selected by their teachers based on their performance in the classroom and/or high achievement on norm referenced tests in science. Students participate after school.

Student Council – The Student Council is made up of a representative and an alternate from each third, fourth and fifth grade classroom. A President (from the fifth-grade representatives); a Vice-President (from the fourth-grade representatives) and a secretary (from the third-grade representatives) are all voted on by the student body. The Student Council members promote many communities service projects throughout the school year.

WKEY Media team – WKEY is a group of fifth grade students who work with broadcasting, technology, and other types of Media. The team is involved with the daily school broadcast, as well as many other tasks and projects throughout the school involving different types of media. Students will try out for the broadcast team.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the educational program, and at Key Elementary we make every effort to schedule at least one trip each year for each of the grade levels. Transportation is provided via Muscogee County School District buses, driven by licensed MCSD transportation personnel. When a field trip is scheduled, your child will bring home a Field Trip Permission Form which gives specific information about the date, destination, and time of the trip. **Parent/guardian signatures are required in order for students to participate in field trips.**

If students are away from school during lunch, the school will provide sack lunches for all students at regular lunch prices. This will ensure that all students will be fed and proper precautions are taken to keep food and drinks safe from spoilage.

If your child has medication at school (prescription or non-prescription) and a Medical Form on file in the office, the medicine will be taken on the trip and administered by the teacher, along with a copy of the medical form.

Food and Beverages

Any snacks or meals sent to school from home should be nutritious. Students are not permitted to bring carbonated drinks, drinks in glass containers, takis, candy or gum. Food from outside vendors is not permitted in the cafeteria. Therefore, parents joining their child for lunch are encouraged to adhere to this rule as well.

Gifted Education

Gifted education is provided for all students, K-12, who have the potential for the Gifted Program. The parent should complete the “Parent Request and Consent for Evaluation Form” and return it to the school. The student will be scheduled for evaluation after these forms are received. Forms are available from Ms. Bryant, School Counselor.

Health Services

The school clinic worker is on duty for four hours each day to administer medication and provide first aid when needed. This person is not necessarily a trained nurse and therefore will not make a diagnosis regarding a student’s condition. If a student is vomiting and/or has a fever, he/she may not return to school for 24 hours. If there is a serious injury during the day at school, parents are notified and/or the family physician is contacted. Parents are also contacted when a student becomes ill at school. (Please see also the section on medication for more information).

Homework

It is the student’s responsibility to know what the homework assignments are and to complete the assignments on time. Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday. Some assignments are long range and require additional planning time at home for completion. A section in the back of this book has been designated for students to write down their homework assignments. Teachers will communicate expectations with students and parents through frequent newsletters, classroom websites, and various other mediums of digital communication. Office phones may not be used by students to call home to request forgotten items, including homework. Once school has been dismissed, students **are not** allowed to reenter the classrooms to retrieve any forgotten items.

Medication

All medication, prescription and non-prescription is kept and administered in the office by school staff. Parents should bring any medication for their children with written instructions for administering it to the school office. A release form is included in this handbook (Appendix B) or may be obtained from the office. No medication, prescription or non-prescription, will be administered without a properly completed form filed in the nurse’s office. Medication must be delivered in its original container with the original label (including name, type of medication, physician’s name, dosage, and instructions regarding medication to be administered). Students may not self-administer medication (prescription or non-prescription) and no medication will be administered without the signed form. A copy of the Medication Administration/Medical Authorization and Release Form may be found in this handbook.

For Health or Safety

Any student who has a communicable disease that poses a substantial threat to the health or safety of the school community may be removed from the school by the principal on the approval of the Superintendent until such student no longer poses such a threat.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Effective control of pediculosis is dependent upon school personnel and families that support a plan to includes:

1. Education of school personnel, families and students

2. Screening of students by families and school personnel
3. Prompt treatment of those infested by: Killing the lice, removing the nits, and cleaning the environment.

When it is discovered that a student has pediculosis, the principal should immediately notify the home and request that arrangements be made for the child to be picked up that day and treatment initiated. The principal should make available the instructions for recommended treatment as specified by the County Health Department. When the parent has treated the child and provides proof of treatment (an empty medicated shampoo bottle or box) or a letter from the Health Department or physician, then the principal can readmit the student back to school. When the student returns, the student should be monitored for any sign that lice have returned. If this occurs, then the student will be sent home. If the lice spread to several students, it may be advisable to inform the entire class or school of the problem and the preventative measures. Advice and assistance may be requested from the Health Department.

Tinea Corporis (ringworm) and Conjunctivitis (pink eye)

When it is discovered that a student has ringworm or pink eye, the principal should immediately notify the home and request that arrangements be made for the child to be picked up that day and treatment initiated. Both conditions must be verified by the doctor and treated before the child may return to school.

Parent/Teacher Communication (See Appendix A)

Open communication between school and home is essential to the success of our students. Parent conferences, phone calls, grades, newsletters, samples of classwork, school website and progress reports are all ways that parents are kept up to date with the progress of their children. **When student work is sent home for review, parents are requested to go over the work with their child, sign the packet, and return it the following day.** Parent signature verifies acknowledgement of all papers attached.

Parent Concerns:

All parents are asked to meet with their child's teacher once during the first nine weeks. Additionally, parents who have concerns or questions regarding their child and/or child's classroom are provided the following guidelines to address the question or concern:

Step 1: Contact your child's teacher via email or by phone (please allow up to 1 business day for a reply).

Step 2: Allow ample/reasonable time for your child's teacher to address the concern within the classroom.

Step 3: If after a reasonable amount of time your concern persists, contact your child's teacher via email or by phone to set up a parent conference (please allow for 1 business day for a reply).

Step 4: If after a reasonable time your concern persists, contact the following personnel via email for additional support: (Please allow up to 2 business days for a reply)

- a. Curricular, Assessment, Academic Performance/Progress Concerns: **Literacy Coach**

- b. Student Behavioral Concerns & Transportation/Bus Concerns: **Assistant Principal**
- c. Social/Emotional, Character Development Concerns: **School Counselor**
- d. Classroom Communication, Teacher Conduct Concerns & any of the above concerns: **Principal**

Step 5: Present your continued concern to the appropriate personnel at a timely manner that is agreeable to both of your schedules.

Step 6: Allow ample/reasonable time for the appropriate personnel to address the concern within the classroom.

Parties/Food in Classroom

Key Elementary celebrates a Winter Holiday Party and an End of the Year party in each classroom. Arrangements for these events will be coordinated by the teacher and room parents. Healthy snacks are strongly encouraged. The teacher has the ultimate responsibility for final approval of all activities and snacks. **Please be mindful that snacks should accommodate the dietary needs of all students in the classroom.** Birthday parties are not school functions. However, parents may contact their child's teacher concerning refreshments and/or recognition of these events. **Again, we ask that refreshments accommodate the dietary needs of all students in the classroom. Also, be mindful that no personal party invitations may be distributed at school.**

Phone Usage

Students are not allowed to use the phone unless the principal deems the request an emergency. Students may not use the phone to request forgotten items. Our goal is to assist our students in developing responsibility.

Report Cards

Report cards are issued every 9 weeks. In addition, a progress report will be sent home three times a year.

Student Accident Insurance

The Muscogee County School District offers student accident insurance to all students in the Muscogee County School District. This insurance is available to you at a nominal fee. Information regarding accident insurance will be provided at registration, or may be obtained from the school office. If you do not wish to take out Student Accident Insurance, your child's health insurance is your responsibility. The Muscogee County School District does not carry health insurance on students.

Student Records

A cumulative record is kept on every child within the school district. The Muscogee County School Board of Education adheres to the "Protection of the Rights and Privacy of Parents and Students" section of Public Law 93-380. If you have any questions about your child's records, please feel free to contact us.

Student Testing and Assessment

Kindergarten students will take the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) to determine school readiness and for placement purposes.

All students in grades 3– 5 are required to take the Georgia Milestones Test during the month of April. This test is intended to assess how well students have learned essential competency skills mandated by the state of Georgia. In addition, other assessments are given throughout the school year to enable teachers and staff to monitor students' learning and assess teaching practices. Attendance is extremely important to student success.

Key Elementary Student Incentive Program for 2025-26

Accelerated Reader (AR): During the 2025-26 school year, Key PTA will partner with the school to applaud students for their achievement throughout the school year with a student incentive program. This program includes students receiving an incentive after students have reached AR Goal. Then, students will receive additional incentives each time they reach their new goal.

Principal's List and Honor Roll: Each nine weeks, students will be recognized for all A's or all A's and B's in the cafeteria with refreshments.

Attendance Incentives: Students will be recognized for perfect attendance.

PTA (Parent/Teacher Association) Key Elementary is proud of the efforts of our PTA. We are very proud of the officers and the parent volunteers who spend long hours working to make this school a great place to learn for our boys and girls. The very first activity for the school year is the PTA membership drive. Membership dues for the year cost \$7.00.

School Grading System

Report cards and progress reports are distributed every nine weeks all grades with the following guidelines or evaluation ranges established by the Muscogee County School District:

Kindergarten	1st – 5th Grades	Art, Music, & Physical Education
<p>The Kindergarten Report Card is used by teachers in evaluating the ongoing growth and development of their students, as defined by the Muscogee County School District.</p> <p>E – Exceeds the Standards M – Meets the Standards P – In Progress N – Needs Improvement</p>	<p>For students in grades 1st – 5th, student performance on formative and summative assignments are averaged and reported using the following scale:</p> <p>90% and above – A 80% - 89% - B 70% - 79% - C Below 60% - F</p>	<p>For students in 1st – 5th, student performance is graded using the following scale:</p> <p>90% and above – A 80%-89% - B 70%-79% - C Below 60% - F</p>

Promotion and Retention Policy

It is the philosophy of the Muscogee County School District that programs of intervention and remediation rather than retention will be preferred alternative for students who are not making satisfactory progress. Retention is appropriate only when the student's developmental needs are such that retention of the student will be beneficial. State law requires that students in the 3rd grade earn an At/Above Grade Level designation in reading to be promoted to the fourth grade on the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS). In 5th grade, state law requires that the students earn At/Above Level designation in reading as well as score in the Developing Learner achievement level or above in mathematics on the GMAS in order to be promoted to the next grade level.

Appendix A

KEY ELEMENTARY CODE OF CONDUCT 2025-2026

We, the James B. Key Elementary faculty and staff believe:

OUR PRINCIPLES AND CORE BELIEFS:

- ♣ Children have the right to a safe and bully-free environment.
 - ♣ Children need to be held responsible for their actions.
 - ♣ Children should be treated with dignity at all times.
- ♣ All school staff, including teachers and administrators, are responsible to create a warm, welcoming, and positive learning environment.
- ♣ Adults should work to build and maintain positive and trusting relationships with students.
 - ♣ Family involvement impacts a student's success.
- ♣ Teachers must teach, model, practice, and positively reinforce and review routines and expectations regularly.

The adults at Key Elementary develop positive relationships with children. These principles are the basis for which all decisions regarding student behavior are made. Staff members are encouraged to handle behavior by selecting from a range of strategies that both fits his/her personal style and supports Key Elementary School's Beliefs & Principles. These strategies could include (but are not limited to) discussion, conversation, teaching, re-teaching, counseling, management, structured student reflection, logical consequences, or temporary removal from the group.

The goal of the Discipline Plan is to foster in each child the ability to be self-disciplined. Key Elementary School seeks to create an atmosphere conducive to learning, creativity, and character development. The school embraces a partnership of teachers and parents to fulfill the obligation to teach students the role of responsible citizenship in a school community.

At Key Elementary we follow a progressive discipline plan where discipline interventions and support begin at the least intrusive and lowest level and work up to more restrictive and punitive levels as students continue to repeat poor choices and poor behaviors. Our policy has at its core the learning experience of the student, and how that experience will help them in their adult life, as well as creating a safe school environment.

SCHOOL WIDE EXPECTATIONS

All members of the Key Elementary School community (staff, families, & students) are expected to:

- ♣ HAVE PRIDE
- ♣ HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE
- ♣ WORK HARD
- ♣ BE SAFE

Our school-wide expectations are explicitly taught to students in all areas of the school

and revisited throughout the year. Furthermore, our expectations are posted throughout the school and visible through our actions. Students experience high personal satisfaction from a sense of independence and competency. A copy of our matrix is found on the following page.

Inappropriate behaviors at Key Elementary fall into 3 categories or levels of offenses. Each level is addressed either by the classroom teacher or the school administration.

Most behaviors are handled directly by the adult-in-charge. We use a variety of verbal and non-verbal strategies in order to gain compliance with students while preserving the relationship. In the case of persistent inappropriate behavior, the teacher will call the child's family and schedule a meeting with them and the student for the purpose assisting the child in coming up with a plan for solving their problem. Administration may be asked to be present at the meeting by either the family or the teacher.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES AND DEFINITIONS

LEVEL 1 OFFENSES	EXAMPLES	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES	HANDLED BY
Out of seat: Failure to remain in assigned area.	<i>Leaving the work area without permission, any instance in which the student left a designated area without teacher permission.</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent, parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral.	TEACHER
Physical Disruption: Bodily actions to disrupt the classroom or school setting	<i>Running, pounding, noise with materials, disrobing, tearing or destroying materials, throwing self to ground, touching others without permission, horseplay, use of electronic devises</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, Time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral, referral to Student Support Team	TEACHER
Verbal Disruption: Any verbal behaviors to disrupt the classroom	<i>Talking out, tantrums, crying, yelling, making noise, speaking loudly</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral, referral to Student Support Team	TEACHER
Minor Verbal Aggression: Verbal behaviors to cause emotional harm	<i>Taunting, teasing, profanity, making fun of another student, name calling, screaming at peers or teachers, disrespect toward adult</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral, referral to Student Support Team	TEACHER
Non-compliance: Failure to engage in requisite activities after specifically prompted by teacher or another adult	<i>Doing opposite of what was asked, refusal to follow an adult's spoken direction within a reasonable time frame (10 to 15 seconds)</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral, referral to Student Support Team	TEACHER

Dishonesty: Deliberate misrepresentation of facts either verbally or through actions (including misrepresenting someone else's work as one's own)	<i>Cheating, lying, omitting facts or details</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, parent contact, detention, student/teacher conference, note to parent parent/teacher conference, Counselor referral, referral to Student Support Team	TEACHER
Dress Code: Failure to adhere to the dress code outlined in the Parent-Student handbook.	<i>Hoodie worn in the building or classroom.</i>	Verbal warning, silent lunch, time out, item confiscation, phone call to parent.	TEACHER

Key Elementary

DISCIPLINE FLOW CHART

